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DISCOURSE OF CONFIRMATION.

I N

A Dialogue between the Minister of a Parish
and a young Servant Maid named SARAH.

Containing proper Instructions for such Persons
as are to be CONFIRMED.

Humbly offered to the Consideration of all Parents
and others who have the Care of educating Youth.

*I have fed you with Milk. 1 Cor. iii 2.
Train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when he is
old, he will not depart from it. Prov. xxii. 6.*

By the Most Reverend
Dr. EDWARD SYNGE,
Late Lord Archbishop of *Tnam* in *Ireland*.

The SIXTH EDITION, Corrected.

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DISCOURSE

CONFIRMATION

Containing proper Arguments and a short Paraphrase
of the 10th Chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew

By the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.
of the Society of Friends

LONDON:
Printed by J. & W. TAYLOR, in Pall-mall.

DEBENTURE

THE 10th

LONDON:
Printed for J. & W. TAYLOR, in Pall-mall.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE former Part of this Dialogue, containing an Account of the Nature and Design of our *Office of Confirmation*, is easy to be understood, but needs not to be got by heart.

The latter Part of it, which explains the Meaning of our *Church-Catechism*, may be got by heart with little Difficulty; and will, I hope, be of good Use. *A grain of Mustard Seed* (as our Saviour speaks) *may grow up into a large Plant.*

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They

They who are illiterate ought, as well as others, to take Care of their Salvation. For which Reason I have made choice of such a Person, and have put such Words into her Mouth as are easy and familiar. And if this short Abstract proves an Introduction to Christian Knowledge and Practice, I have my End.

EDW. TUAM.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
CONFIRMATION, &c.

Sarab. **O**N Sunday last you were pleased to give public Notice in the Church, that on that Day Month the Bishop would be with us, to perform the Office of *Confirmation*, for this, and the near adjoining Parishes: And that therefore all of your Parish, who desire to be confirmed, should in the mean time come to you to be examined and instructed; that you might enter down their Names in Writing, for that Purpose. I am one of your Parishioners who desire to be confirmed, and in order thereunto to be examined and instructed.

Minister. Have you considered what is the Meaning and Design of this Office of *Confirmation*?

Sar. I am so unhappy as not to be able to read: But I often get one of my Fellow-Servants to read to me; and upon hearing the Office of *Confirmation* (as it stands in our Common-Prayer Book) thus read, I think I understand the Meaning of it. We are generally

rally baptized, and thereby admitted as Members of the Church of Christ, in the time of our Infancy. Our Godfathers and Godmothers (as they are called) do then vow and promise, in our Names, and for us respectively, That we will *renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanity of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh: That we will believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith: And that we will keep God's holy Will and Commandments.* Now, since we are incapable of understanding this Vow or Promise at the time of the first making of it, it is absolutely necessary that, when we come to Years of Discretion, we should ratify and take it upon ourselves, and fulfil it to the best of our Power; or else we cannot hope for eternal Salvation, which God has promised only to true Believers and good Livers. The Bishop therefore, as God's Minister, demands of all those who are to be confirmed Whether each of them does for himself thus ratify and take upon himself to keep that Vow and Promise, which was made in his Name at his Baptism; and upon their declaring that they do so, he proceeds, with Prayer and laying on of his Hands, to beg of God that he would defend and strengthen all and each of them by his Grace and holy Spirit, that in the Course of their Lives they may effectually perform that Vow and Promise which they now take upon themselves. This
 Laying

Laying on of Hands, with Prayer, by the Bishop, we call by the Name of *Confirmation*; the Intent of it being, that by the Grace of God's holy Spirit, which is thus prayed for, the Youth should be confirmed and strengthened in their holy Resolution of performing their Baptismal Vow, which they then take upon themselves, unto their Lives end.

Min. Do you think it necessary to your Salvation that you should be after this manner confirmed?

Sar. I do not apprehend that there is the like Necessity for it, as there is or was that I should have been baptized: Baptism being expressly commanded by *Christ*, *Matt. xxviii. 19.* but no such *Command* appearing for our manner of *Confirmation*. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*, says *Christ*, *Mark xvi. 16.* He therefore who so believes the Gospel, as to lead his Life according to it, and has been admitted into the Church of *Christ* by Baptism, seems to me to be in a State of Salvation, altho' things may have so fallen out, as that he never has been *confirmed* after our manner. And tho' Baptism itself be expressly commanded (for which Reason it ought never to be neglected) yet I do not think but that in some Cases a Man may be saved without it; provided that he himself is not the wilful Cause of the want of it. The Case of the Thief upon the Cross (*Luke xxiii. 43*) may appear to be

very extraordinary, and therefore not proper to be urged: But I have been informed that in the primitive Times of Persecution, some, who had sincerely embraced the Christian Faith, suffered Martyrdom for it before they had the Opportunity of being baptized; of whose Salvation yet no Doubt has been made. Some Children are still-born, or otherwise die unbaptized; and some Persons are brought up in invincible Error concerning the Necessity of Baptism: Nor can I think that God who is infinitely good and gracious, will exclude any one from Salvation for such a thing as cannot be laid to his Charge as a Fault of his own. But if a Man be convinced, or has good Reason to believe that *Christ* has commanded all Members of his Church to be baptized, and yet neglects it, and much more if he despises it; such a Man is guilty of a most sinful Presumption, and most justly to be condemned for it. From our Saviour's own Words, *Teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* Matt. xxviii. 19. and *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,* Mark xvi. 16. we may learn, that by Baptism we are received as visible Members of *Christ's* Church: And all sober Christians agree that a Man, who is known never to have been baptized, ought not to be admitted to the Holy Communion. But by the Rubric at the End of our *Order of Confirmation*, it appears that if a Man be ready and desirous to be confirmed,

firmed, but wants an Opportunity for it; he may be *admitted to the Holy Communion*. Which shews that, in the Judgment of our Church, a Man who is not confirmed, may yet be in a State of Salvation.

Min. If *Confirmation* is not necessary to your Salvation, why are you so desirous of it?

Sar. I take it to be useful to very good Purposes, and therefore not to be neglected, where it may be had; altho' it be not necessary in the same Sense as Christ's Command has made Baptism to be.

Min. Give me your Thoughts of this Matter.

Sar. I will, according as I have learnt. I have heard the Necessity of Baptism enforced by many Passages of holy Scripture; most of which have been read to me out of a little Book called the *The Word of God the best Guide*; Part ii. Chap. 20. As to what relates to *Confirmation*, I have heard it plainly suggested from two or three Passages of the *New Testament*; particularly from *Acts* viii. 15, 16, 17. and *Acts* xix. 6. that the Apostles used to lay their Hands upon Persons who had been baptized, and to pray for them that they might receive the *Holy Ghost*. And altho' the miraculous Gifts, which thereupon followed, have long since ceased; yet since all Christians ought to believe that *it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure*; *Philip*. ii. 13. and that

therefore the Grace and Assistance of his Holy Spirit is to be sought for, in order to our Leading a holy Life; I cannot but conclude that this Laying on of Hands upon Persons that have been baptized, together with Prayer to God for their Growth in Grace, (which we call *Confirmation*) is a Godly Custom, and ever fit to be continued in the Christian Church; altho' I do not take upon me to condemn those Churches, where it is not administered in the same manner, as it is in ours. I own myself bound to believe and to do as my Godfathers and Godmothers have promised for me: And this because it is God's Command that I should so believe and do; without which Command of God, their Promise or Vow made in my Name, could lay no Obligation upon me. This Obligation under which I am laid, not by my Godfathers and Godmothers, but by God himself, I ought often to think of, and endeavour to fulfil: And it is most highly proper that I should own all this before God, the Bishop, who is his Minister, and the Congregation, who are his People, when I come to be *confirmed*.

Min. All that you are thus required to believe and to do is comprized in our excellent Church-Catechism. Can you repeat the Catechism?

Sar. I cannot exactly repeat all the Words of it. But I hope I understand the Meaning of it all.

Min.

Min. I shall therefore examine you touching the Meaning of the Catechism only, without insisting strictly upon all the Words of it. What Benefit was it, or is it to you, that you were baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

Sar. Great Benefit: For, by God's Blessing on his own Ordinance of Baptism, I was thereby made a Member of the Church of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Min. What must you do that you may not be deprived of these great Benefits and Advantages?

Sar. I must renounce the Devil, and all manner of Sin and Wickedness: I must believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith: And I must give Obedience to all God's Commandments, thro' the whole Course of my Life.

Min. Rehearse the Articles of the Christian Faith.

Sar. *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into Hell. The third Day he rose again from the Dead: He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the Quick*

and the Dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting. Amen.

Min. What do you hereby chiefly and principally learn to believe?

Sar. I learn to believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in whose Name I was baptized.

Min. What do you believe of God the Father?

Sar. I believe that by his Almighty Power He made me and all the World.

Min. What do you believe of God the Son?

Sar. I believe that he took our Nature upon Him, died for the Sins of all Mankind, rose again, and ascended into Glory: And that he is to be our judge at the last great Day.

Min. What do you believe of God the Holy Ghost?

Sar. I believe that by his Grace and Assistance, all faithful Members of *Christ's* Church are enabled to lead Holy Lives.

Min. What do you believe of *Christ's* Church?

Sar. I believe that it is a Catholic or universal Church; and not confined to any one Nation or People; That every true Member of this Church is holy: That they all ought to maintain Communion and Fellowship together

gether in *Christ Jesus*; and that so doing they shall obtain Forgiveness of their Sins, and everlasting Happiness in the Life to come.

Min. How many Commandments has God given us?

Sar. Chiefly ten; being the same which God himself spake unto the Children of *Israel*.

Min. Are God's Commandments given to us as Rules for our Words and Actions alone?

Sar. They ought also to be the Rules of our inward Desires and Inclinations.

Min. The first Commandment is in these Words: *Thou shalt have none other Gods but me*. What does this Commandment require from us?

Sar. This Commandment requires, that we should love, fear, and honour God above all Things, and give religious Worship to none but himself.

Min. The second Commandment is in these Words: *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, nor the Likeness of any Thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them*. What does this Commandment require from us?

Sar. This Commandment requires that we should make no Picture or Image of God, who is a Spirit, John iv. 34. *whom no Man hath seen nor can see*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. It also
2 requires

requires that we should not worship nor bow down to any Picture or Image whatsoever.

Min. The third Commandment is this: *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.* What does this Commandment require?

Sar. It requires that we should honour and reverence the name of God; and never profane it, either by foolish talking, or vain or false swearing or cursing.

Min. The fourth Commandment is this: *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-Day.* What does this Commandment require?

Sar. It requires that we should worship God, not only privately, but publickly also: And that one Day in seven should more especially be set apart for his Worship and Service; which amongst us Christians is *the Lord's Day.*

Min. The fifth Commandment is, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother.* What does this Commandment require?

Sar. It requires that we should love, honour, and obey our Parents, and all our Superiors in Church and State.

Min. The Sixth Commandment is, *Thou shalt do no Murder.* What is hereby requir'd?

Sar. It is required that we should abstain from Murder, Hatred, Malice, and Revenge; and that we should be kindly affectioned one towards another.

Min. The seventh Commandment is, *Thou shalt*

shalt not commit Adultery. What is hereby required?

Sar. It is required that we should abstain from Adultery, Whoredom, and all manner of Lewdness in Thought, Word, and Deed: And that we should carefully keep our Bodies in Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity.

Min. The eighth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not steal.* What is hereby required?

Sar. It is required that we should not steal, cheat, or defraud; but honestly give to every Man whatever is due to him.

Min. The ninth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.* What is hereby required?

Sar. It is required that we should bear false Witness against no Man; but abstain from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering: And that we should be true and sincere in all we say.

Min. The tenth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet.* What is hereby required?

Sar. It is required that every one should be content with what is his own; and not desire that which belongs to any other Man, without making him full Reparation for it.

Min. Give me the Substance and Sum of all God's Commandments in few Words.

Sar. It is to love God above all other Things; and to love our Neighbour as sincerely as we love ourselves.

Min. Are you able to keep these Commandments?

Sar.

Sar. Not without God's Grace and Assistance, which I must continually pray for.

Min. Say the Lord's Prayer.

Sar. *Our Father which art in Heaven :
Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come.
Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.
Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive
us our Trespases, as we forgive them that
trespass against us. And lead us not into
Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For
thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the
Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Min. Do you pray for yourself alone ?

Sar. I pray for all Mankind, together with myself.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Our Father which art in Heaven ?*

Sar. I give Glory to God, as being our Supreme Lord and heavenly Father.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Hallowed be thy Name ?*

Sar. I pray that God's holy Name may be sanctified and revered throughout the World. *

Min. What mean you when you say, *Thy Kingdom come ?*

Sar. I pray that all Men may become obedient unto God as their eternal King ; and that we all may be Partakers of his heavenly Kingdom.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven ?*

Sar.

Sar. I pray that we may all be obedient to God's Will here on Earth, as the holy Angels and blessed Spirits are in Heaven.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Give us this Day our daily Bread?*

Sar. I pray that God would give us the Necessaries of Life, of which *Bread* is reckoned to be the chief.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us?*

Sar. I pray that, as we forgive all others who have wronged us, so God would forgive us our Sins, whereby we have offended him.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Lead us not into Temptation?*

Sar. I pray that God would preserve us from every thing that may tempt or draw us into Sin.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Deliver us from Evil?*

Sar. I pray that God would deliver us from all Calamities and Afflictions of this World; But above all, from the Evil of Sin, and the consequent Evil of eternal Damnation.

Min. What mean you when you say, *Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever?*

Sar. I give Praise and Glory to God for the Greatness of his Power and Majesty.

Min. Do you distinctly mean all these Things as often as you say the Lord's Prayer?

Sar.

Sar. I pray God to enable me so to do : For the best Words in Prayer will not be accepted by him without their proper Meaning.

Min. Why do you say *Amen* at the End both of the *Creed* and the *Lord's Prayer* ?

Sar. *Amen* signifies as much as *Verily*, *Truly*, or *So be it* : And I pronounce it at the End both of my *Creed* and *Prayer*, to shew that my Heart agrees with my Mouth.

Min. How many Divine Ordinances are there, which we call *Sacraments* ?

Sar. For what Reason it is that any of God's Ordinances are called *Sacraments*, I think it not necessary for me to enquire. Concerning this it is enough for me to know, that *Baptism* and the Holy Communion, or *Supper of the Lord* (which we call the two *Sacraments*) are appointed by *Christ* as Means of our Salvation.

Min. What is the outward and visible Part of *Baptism* ?

Sar. Water, wherein *Christ* has commanded all Nations to be baptized, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Min. What is the inward and visible Part of it ?

Sar. God's Grace and Blessing attending his own Ordinance ; whereby we are cleansed from the Pollution of Sin, and enabled to live in Obedience to him.

Min. What is required from Persons to be baptized ?

Sar.

Sar. Faith and Repentance.

Min. Why then are Infants baptized, who are incapable both of believing and repenting?

Sar. They are bound to believe and repent as soon as they become capable, of which their Parents and Sureties, who bring them to Baptism, are obliged to take all due Care.

Min. Why was the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* ordained?

Sar. It was ordained for the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of *Christ*, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby.

Min. What is the outward and visible Part of the *Lord's Supper*?

Sar. Bread and Wine: Both which *Christ* has commanded to be received.

Min. What is the inward and invisible Part of it?

Sar. The Communion or Participation of the Body and Blood of *Christ*; which by Faith we spiritually receive in the *Lord's Supper*; and thereby are made Partakers of the Benefits of his Death and Passion.

Min. What Preparation is required of those who come to the *Lord's Supper*?

Sar. True Repentance for all past Sins; with a stedfast Purpose of leading a Holy Life for the Time to come: Faith in *Jesus Christ*, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death;

Death ; and Charity towards all Mankind, not only Friends, but also Strangers and Enemies.

Min. Will you often thus prepare yourself for the *Lord's Supper* ?

Sar. I hope I shall, through the Grace and Assistance of God.

Min. How came you by all this Instruction ?

Sar. My Parents, tho' poor and illiterate, were virtuous and religious, and taught me by Word of Mouth as much as they could of true Religion. They carried me with them constantly to the Church, where I was always attentive to the whole Service and Sermon, and to those plain Explications of the Church Catechism which often were made by the Minister. I took all the Opportunities I could get of hearing the Bible read ; and particularly the four Gospels. I also got two or three other plain small Books of Religion read to me : Out of all which I always endeavoured to remember as much as I could : Although I am often at a Loss for Words to express even such Things as I understand. To all this I add my constant Prayers to God, that I may *know him and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent* ; which, *Christ* has told us, *is Life eternal*, John xvii. 3.

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